

**SSUDAC Meeting Summary**  
**October 17, 2013**

**Members Present:** Ernest Bland, Carmen Camacho, Dan Figueroa, Jon Lourie, Dimitri Michaud, Ryan Riley, Melvin Tull, Suzy Zusy

**Members Absent:** Don Hague, Yuri Van Mierlo

**Call to Order and Introductions:**

- Mr. Mel Tull, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:24 p.m.
- Committee member Carmen Camacho motioned to approve last month's meeting summary (for the record). Dan Figueroa seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

**Reports:**

**Police Briefing & Crime Report**

Lt. Jim Brown, Montgomery County 3<sup>rd</sup> Police Precinct

- Lt. Brown reported a domestic homicide incident at 1520 East-West Highway (The Blairs). The suspect is currently being held without bond.
- Lt. Brown reported two recent robbery incidents, one of which occurred at Montgomery College.
- Montgomery County officers were able to prevent a robbery from occurring at the 7-Eleven convenience store on Georgia Ave.
- The new 3<sup>rd</sup> District police station is under construction and the move to the new station located at the intersection of US Route 29 and MD 650 is set to take place in November or December of this year. The new building will be a green building, with "weeping" tile siding to collect rain, and green landscaped roofs. The building will also have a community meeting room, County vehicle gas pumps and 30 visitor parking spaces.
- Both central business district officer teams and the traffic team will remain in Silver Spring.
- Committee member Carmen Camacho asked about the number of officers working in the downtown area. Lt. Brown replied that there are approximately 8-12 officers working in the CBD at one time on various shifts.

## Urban District Report

Ms. Yvette Freeman, Chief of Operations, Silver Spring Urban District

- Ms. Freeman reported on continuing State Highway Administration work. She noted Committee Chair Mel Tull's assistance with averting what could have been a hazard where a large metal plate covering a Pepco vault on Colesville Rd. and Georgia Ave. was shifting.
- Committee member Mel Tull asked that acknowledgement be given to SSUD Red Shirt staff that brought this Pepco vault issue to light. Ms. Freeman said that she would pass feedback on to the staff responsible.
- Ms. Freeman said that there are a large number of roadway and sidewalk issues that need to be addressed and that she is frequently in contact with SHA.
- Ms. Freeman contacted a Washington Gas representative. In an effort to facilitate communication about issues in the downtown area. Ms. Freeman alerted WSSC to water flowing out near a manhole cover on East West Highway.
- The Silver Spring GreenFest on October 5<sup>th</sup> and the South Silver Spring Street Festival on September 28<sup>th</sup> were successful events. The Silver Spring Urban District's Big Belly Solar Trash Compactors and recycling efforts were highlighted at the GreenFest.
- Ms. Freeman worked with Eric Rasch, Operations Manager for the Silver Spring Civic Building to create new Silver Spring Urban District signs which have been placed in side panel pockets on the Big Belly compactors.
- Committee member Carmen Camacho will be meeting with SSUD Red Shirt staff to plan a holiday celebration.
- Mr. Ernest Bland and Ernest Bland Associates celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary on October 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Ms. Camacho asked about SSUD Red Shirts working overtime hours when vendors at festivals take extra time to break down their vending booths, and suggested that a deposit system be introduced to shift the cost absorption to the vendor rather than the Urban District.
- Mr. Eric Rasch mentioned that he has been working with multiple festival organizers to refine the setup process for events at Veterans Plaza, including considering a requirement for event organizers to rent their own dumpster when an event reaches a certain attendee threshold.

## Silver Spring Regional Area Director's Report

Mr. Reemberto Rodriguez, Director, Silver Spring Regional Center

- Veterans Plaza and the Civic Building are in their 4<sup>th</sup> year of operation.
- The recent Maker Fair on October 7<sup>th</sup> utilized both Veterans Plaza and the Civic Building.
- Mr. Rodriguez spoke briefly about the wide range of third party events that occur on the Plaza annually, and said that he hopes to eventually compile a calendar of events for each coming year.
- Only three events (the Jazz Festival, Thanksgiving Parade and Summer Concert Series) are County-sponsored events. All others are paid for and organized by independent third parties.
- Mr. Rodriguez officially introduced Eric Rasch, the new Operations Manager for the Silver Spring Civic Building.
- The public ice skating rink at Veterans Plaza is now open.
- Mr. Rodriguez mentioned changes to food vendor set-up at events to keep their tents from blocking existing brick and mortar businesses.
- A new coffee shop, Kaldi's Coffee, has opened on Silver Spring Ave.
- The Nighttime Economy Taskforce meetings with area advisory groups took place on October 14<sup>th</sup> and their recommendations will be released soon.
- Multiple events will be taking place at the Civic Building on Monday, October 21<sup>st</sup>, including two political forums and a cultural arts celebration.
- The Silver Spring Zombie Walk will be taking place from Sligo Ave. along Fenton St. to Ellsworth Ave. on October 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Ms. Carmen Camacho mentioned two events being sponsored by the Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce; the "Discover The Taste Of Silver Spring" taking place at Discovery on November 14<sup>th</sup> and a seminar on the Affordable Care Act in the context of small businesses on October 30th at the Chamber.
- Mr. Ernest Bland asked about updated opening dates for the new Silver Spring Library and the Silver Spring Transit Center. Mr. Rodriguez said that the library is scheduled to open in 2015 and that the Transit Center's website has the latest information about its scheduled opening date.

## New Business

- Committee member Ernest Bland introduced Dimitri Michaud, one of the new SSUD Advisory Committee members representing residents.
- Mr. Rich Romer from Councilmember Valerie Ervin's office shared that the Silver Spring bike share stations are now open, and that due to weather the Audacity of Hoops 3 on 3 basketball tournament has been moved to November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

## United States Postal Service Presentation

Margie Rodriguez, United States Postal Service

- Ms. Rodriguez from the Postal Service provided a brief overview of post office operations in Silver Spring and the surrounding areas within Montgomery County.
- The postal service moved to their current location in the Spring Center shopping center on 16<sup>th</sup> St. in May 2012 after closing their centrally located downtown branches. There are currently no plans to change locations.
- The lease at the 16<sup>th</sup> St. post office location is in effect until 2022. If the construction of the Purple Line occurs on schedule, the location may be forced to move prior to the expiration of the lease.
- Ms. Rodriguez mentioned that small contract postal units could be set up within existing businesses in the Silver Spring area, in lieu of a full post office.
- Committee member Jon Lourie expressed concern that the current post office location is not in an area convenient to the central business district, and is not served by the Van Go, downtown Silver Spring's local shuttle service.
- Ms. Rodriguez explained that the move to the 16<sup>th</sup> St. location was due to the high cost of real estate in the downtown area. She noted that the postal service held 3 public hearings regarding the move to its current location.
- Committee member Ernest Bland suggested two buildings that could be considered for new post office locations - the soon-to-be vacated police station on Sligo Ave., and the current library building on Colesville Rd. that will be vacated when the new library opens on Wayne Ave. and Fenton St.
- Mr. Romer mentioned that there will be a final decision about the Purple Line construction early next year which will provide resolution regarding the 16<sup>th</sup> St. location and its lease.

- Mr. Lourie asked if postal service staff could provide patronage statistics for the post office location since its move to 16<sup>th</sup> St.
- Mr. Ryan Riley suggested that installing self-service kiosks in public locations would be a viable short-term solution.
- Mr. Dimitri Michaud suggested that developers could be encouraged to install a contract post office as a way of fulfilling their 20% public amenity space requirement for development.

#### Consortium Concept for Black Box Theatre

Julie Reiner and David Minton, Lumina Studio

- Four area theaters (Forum Theater, Lumina Studio Theater, Art St. Theater and the Live Garra Theater) have formed a non-profit Consortium to replace the Roundhouse Theater in its current location at the Black Box Theater when its lease expires in June of 2014.
- The County Executive has asked the Consortium for a business plan and proposal for their use of the space. The Consortium requested community input and have outlined a general business plan with a scope of services and guidelines for operation. Their long term goal is to bring on a board of directors and facility manager when revenue has stabilized.
- The Consortium has been negotiating with other local theater groups about providing space for their productions.
- The Consortium expects to be awarded a 5 year contract for the space and has outlined a schedule for the next 3 years, with an anticipated start date in February or March of 2014.
- Committee member Jon Lourie commented on the need to draw more attention to the outside of the theater and increase publicity. Ms. Reiner said that their team has put together a capitol budget to make improvements to both the interior and exterior of the theater.
- Mr. Ernest Bland asked about details of the business plan regarding projected revenue streams to cover operating costs. Mr. Minton said that they have a 3 year budget plan, with an approximately 10% contingency fund in place. Rent, utilities and basic maintenance of the building are paid for by the County.
- Mr. Minton requested that a member of the Advisory Committee review their current business plan. Ms. Carmen Camacho volunteered to review the plan.
- Jon Lourie motioned to write a letter of support for the project, with Carmen Camacho seconding. The motion was passed unanimously.

## Newell St. Presentation

Anne Mead, Linowes & Blocher, LLP

- Ms. Mead and Mr. Dan Slear updated the Advisory Committee about the redevelopment at Newell St. and Eastern Ave.
- The site plan has been filed with the planning board.
- The Newell St. development is a 9 story multifamily residential development, with additional ground floor retail and two below grade residential parking levels.
- The building will have approximately 187 residential units.
- Artist David Hess is working with the project's landscape architect to design aspects of the outdoor space. Features include hardy, low-maintenance plants and interpretive signage to inform residents about bio-retention and storm water management.
- Butterfly gardens, along with bat and bird houses are other amenities being considered for the outdoor space.
- Ms. Freeman asked if existing trees will be replaced by new trees. She recommended careful consideration regarding the type of replacement tree due to current issues with birds in the area. Mr. Slear said that the trees would be replanted along Newell St. once construction has been completed.
- Mr. Tull suggested the project's landscape architect work with the Urban District to select an appropriate species of tree.
- Mr. Ryan Riley asked about the decision between apartments or condos for the residential units. Mr. Slear replied that it is based on the market.
- Ms. Carmen Camacho asked about the breakdown in bedroom sizes. Mr. Slear replied that 65% of the units would be 1 bedroom units with the remaining 35% being broken down between 2 bedroom and studio units.
- Mr. Mel Tull suggested a redesign of the outdoor planters to make them harder to access or climb on. Ms. Mead said that their landscape architect would be revising the design.
- Mr. Riley proposed a motion to support the project at its current site plan phase. Mr. Ernest Bland seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.